

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A wire guide adapted and configured to convey a weld wire in a weld wire drive assembly, and to provide lateral support to such weld wire in such weld wire drive assembly, such weld wire drive assembly having ~~at least one drive roll which is adapted and configured to drive such weld wire in such drive assembly~~ a pair of radially aligned drive rolls that interface the weld wire at a nip defined therebetween, said wire guide comprising:

- (a) an elongate body having an outer surface, a length, and first and second ends;
- (b) an elongate bore, extending along the length of, and through, said elongate body;
and
- (c) an aperture extending through said elongate body transverse to, and intersecting, the elongate bore,

wherein the drive roll is wider than the wire guide and a portion of the elongate body extends continuously between the drive rolls, laterally supporting the weld wire as it traverses the nip.

2. (Original) A wire guide as in Claim 1, a receptacle extending inwardly, along the length of said wire guide, from at least one of the first and second ends.

3. (Original) A wire guide as in Claim 2, said receptacle defining a generally cylindrical cavity.

4. (Original) A wire guide as in Claim 2, said receptacle defining a generally conical cavity.

5. (Original) A wire guide as in Claim 1, the aperture comprising first and second depressions extending into the outer surface of said elongate body from opposing sides thereof,

each such depression extending fully across a width of the elongate bore so as to define a side elevation depression profile, and opening into the elongate bore.

6. (Original) A wire guide as in Claim 1, said elongate body defining a first width dimension, and being adapted and configured to cooperate with a such drive roll having a second width dimension between first and second sides of such drive roll, magnitude of the first width dimension of said elongate body being less than magnitude of the second width dimension of such drive roll.

7. (Original) A wire guide as in Claim 1, the aperture comprising a generally arcuate depression extending into the outer surface of said elongate body.

8. (Previously Presented) A wire guide as in Claim 1, further comprising an inlet guide having a bore extending therethrough and communicating with one of said first and second ends of said elongate body, (i) the bore which extends through said inlet guide, and (ii) the bore which extends through said elongate body, being generally coaxial with respect to each other.

9. (Original) A wire guide as in Claim 1, the aperture comprising a first aperture, said elongate body further comprising a second aperture extending through said elongate body, transverse to the elongate bore, the first and second apertures being spaced from each other along the length of said elongate body.

10. (Previously Presented) A wire guide as in Claim 1 wherein the elongate bore and the aperture define the same width dimension where the drive roll contacts the weld wire.

11. (Original) A wire guide as in Claim 1 wherein the aperture has a length extending along the length of said elongate body, and a width, and wherein the width of the aperture is generally limited to no more than about three times a diameter of the elongate bore.

12. (Previously Presented) A wire guide as in Claim 5 wherein the first and second depressions open into each other.

13. (Original) A wire feeder assembly adapted and configured to feed weld wire, said wire feeder assembly comprising a wire guide as in Claim 1.

14. (Original) A welding system comprising a wire feeder assembly as in Claim 13.

15. (Original) A method of advancing a weld wire along a generally pre-determined path of travel, the method comprising using a wire feeder assembly as in Claim 13 to so advance the wire.

16-58. (Cancelled)

59. (Currently Amended) A wire guide adapted and configured to convey a weld wire in a weld wire drive assembly, and to provide lateral support to such weld wire in such weld wire drive assembly, such weld wire drive assembly having at least one drive roll which is adapted and configured to drive such weld wire in such drive assembly, said wire guide comprising:

- (a) an elongate body having an outer surface, a length, and first and second ends,
- (b) an elongate bore, being circular in cross-section, ~~comprising a bore circumference, the elongate bore extending along through the length of, and through, said the~~ elongate body; and
- (c) an aperture defining a continuous perimeter and extending through ~~said the~~ elongate body transverse to, and intersecting, the elongate bore,

wherein the wire guide has a reduced width dimension adjacent the aperture.

60. (Original) A wire guide as in Claim 59, the aperture comprising first and second depressions extending into the outer surface of said elongate body from opposing sides thereof, each such depression extending fully across a width of the elongate bore so as to define a side elevation depression profile, and opening into the elongate bore.

61. (Original) A wire guide as in Claim 59, said elongate body defining a first width dimension and being adapted and configured to cooperate with a such drive roll having a second width dimension between first and second sides of such drive roll, magnitude of the first width dimension of said elongate body being less than magnitude of the second width dimension of such drive roll.

62. (Original) A wire guide as in Claim 59, the aperture comprising a generally arcuate depression extending into the outer surface of said elongate body.

63. (Original) A wire guide as in Claim 59, the aperture comprising a first aperture, said elongate body further comprising a second aperture extending through said elongate body, transverse to the elongate bore, the first and second apertures being spaced from each other along the length of said elongate body.

64. (Original) A wire guide as in Claim 59 wherein the aperture has a length extending along the length of said elongate body, and a width, and wherein the width of the aperture is generally limited to no more than about 3 times a diameter of the elongate bore.

65. (Original) A wire feeder assembly adapted and configured to feed weld wire, said wire feeder assembly comprising a wire guide as in Claim 59.

66. (Original) A welding system comprising a wire feeder assembly as in Claim 65.

67. (Original) A method of advancing a weld wire along a generally pre-determined path of travel, the method comprising using a wire feeder assembly as in Claim 65 to so advance the wire.

68. (Cancelled)

69. (Currently Amended) A wire guide adapted and configured to convey a weld wire having a predetermined diameter through a weld wire drive assembly, and to provide lateral support to such weld wire in the weld wire drive assembly, such weld wire drive assembly having at least one drive roll for driving the weld wire, the wire guide comprising:

- (a) an elongate body including opposing upper and lower ridges, and
 - (i) a width dimension that is less than a width dimension of the drive roll, and
 - (ii) a minimum height dimension defined between the opposing upper and lower ridges, wherein the minimum height dimension is greater in magnitude than the diameter of the weld wire;
- (b) an elongate bore extending ~~axially and continuously~~ through the length of elongate body; and
- (c) an aperture extending through the elongate body, providing access to the weld wire;

~~wherein the drive roll is wider than the wire guide and the wire guide, adjacent the aperture, defines a transverse cross section having a height dimension that is greater than the diameter of the weld wire.~~

70. (New) A wire guide adapted and configured to convey a weld wire having a predetermined diameter through a weld wire drive assembly that includes a radially aligned pair of drive rolls defining a nip therebetween, the wire guide comprising:

- (a) an elongate body that is narrower than the drive rolls, at least a portion of the elongate body extending continuously between an input side of the drive rolls

and an output side of the drive rolls for continuously laterally supporting the weld wire;

- (b) an elongate bore extending through the length of the elongate body; and
- (c) an aperture extending through the elongate body proximate the nip between the drive rolls,

wherein a uniform lateral clearance is defined between the weld wire and the elongate body, along the entire length of the elongate body.

71. (New) A wire guide as in claim 70, wherein the radially aligned drive rolls interface the weld wire at a nip defined therebetween, and were wherein the elongate body defines a minimum height dimension and a minimum width dimension proximate the nip.

72. (New) A wire guide as in claim 71, wherein the minimum height dimension is defined between opposing upper and lower ridges.

73. (New) A wire guide as in claim 72, wherein the ridges are displaced from the outermost lateral portions of the elongate body.

74. (New) A wire guide as in claim 70 wherein a cross-section of the elongate body, adjacent the aperture, defines first and second diamond shaped segments for laterally supporting the weld wire.